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SOME REFERENCES TO ELIZABETHAN THEATERS

BY THORNTON S. GRAVES

No doubt most of the extant contemporary references to Elizabethan theaters have been utilized by such writers as Malone, Collier, Rendle, Halliwell-Phillips, and Adams. A few, however, do not seem to have been known to these scholars. They are of decidedly minor importance but may be of some interest to students of the early drama.

1. The Theatre and the Curtain

(a) T. F.'s *Newes from the North* (1585), the dedication of which to Lord Henry Sidney is dated November 26, 1579, contains one allusion to the Theatre and Curtain which is frequently cited, but no one, I believe, has called attention to the story in the same work (Bk. II, Sig. Li) of the rich man in Holborn who "if any freend or neighbour requires him to goe with them to the Tavern, to the Ale house, to the Theater, to Y^e Curtain as they tearm it, or to Paris garden or any such place of expence," refuses their invitation, and on their return puts the amount his trip would have cost him into his savings-box.

(b) In *Quips upon Questions* (1600) by Clunnyco de Curtanio Snuffe (i. e., John Singer?) one of the "quips" is titled "Who's the Foole now?" a rime about a man who after getting drunk went to the Curtain, where he fell asleep and was robbed by

A soberer man then he, or girle or boy,
I know not who.¹

¹ Note that in the *Middlesex County Records* under date of March 11, 1600, appears the notice of the arrest of William Haukins, charged with taking a purse at the Curtain (cf. Adams's *Shakespearean Playhouses*, p. 85). For other references to purse-taking at the playhouses see Tobie Matthews' reference on Sept. 20, 1598, to the "Almain" who lost 300 crowns at a new play called "Every Mans Humor" (*Cal. State Papers, Domestic* 1598-1601, p. 97); *A Manifest Detection of Dice Play* (Percy Society, **xxix**, p. 39); Middleton's *Black Book* (Bullen's ed. of Middleton, **viii**, p. 41); *Nobody and Somebody* (ed. Simpson, **II**. 1893-96); Middleton's *Roaring Girl*, **v**, i; *Banquet of Jest*s (1657), pp. 108-109; Sampson in *Mod. Lang. Notes* for June, 1915, p. 195.

(c) The last lines of the following passage from Richard West's *The Court of Conscience* (1607) are fairly well known, but the whole passage deserves quotation on account of the description of the vicinity of the Curtain:

Now Causaliero you have bene at Paules,
 At forenoones sermon? whether walke you now
 To Lincolnes Inne, the Temple, or the Rowles,
 And so to Moore-gate to the Golden plowgh?
 In the after noone youle walke a turne or two,
 About Moore-field the grounds all leueld new.
 The winds too high, the dust flies in your eyes,
 Tis paultrie walking there till th'elmes be growne;
 A better place then that you can deuise,
 Towards the Curtaine then you must be gon,
 The garden alleyes paled on either side,
 Ift be too narrow, walking there you slide.
 Into a house among a bawdy crew,
 Of damned whores; I theres your whole delight.

(d) J. H. in his *This Worlds Folly* (1615), after speaking very bitterly against "Fortune-fatted fooles," including Garlick and Greene—a passage implying that these actors were connected with the Fortune Theatre—writes thus: "Those also stand within the stroke of my penne, who were wont to *Curtaine* ouer their defects with knauish conueyances, and scum off the froth of all wanton vanity, to qualify the eager appetite of their slapping Favorites" (Sig. B2),—a reference which does not speak in very complimentary terms of Curtain entertainments and which possibly implies that the Curtain was temporarily not in use *ca.* 1615.

2. The Rose

Tucca's remark in Dekker's *Satiromastix*, III, i, that Miniver's breath is "as sweet as the Rose that growes by the Beare-garden" is generally interpreted as indicating that the Rose, on account of its proximity to the bear-baiting, was sometimes visited by unpleasant odors. That Tucca is referring rather to the flower which grew abundantly in the Paris-garden district is made probable by a very similar passage in Henry King's *Poems, Elegies, Paradoxes, and Sonets* (1664) in which the poet says (Ed. Mason, p. 39) of Madam Gabina's breath that

'tis somewhat like the smell
That does in Ember weeks on Fishstreet dwell;
Or as a man should fasting scent the Rose
Which in the savoury Bear-garden growes.

King may have known Dekker's play, but it seems more probable that both authors were employing a common expression at a period when the odor of the Bear Garden was a topic of much conversation.²

3. The Blackfriars and the Globe

(a) Austin Saker in his *Narbonnus* (1580) remarks that "the Theatres could not stand except Narbonnus were there, nor the plaies goe forwarde unlesse he trimmed the stage,"—which may possibly be an early allusion to sitting on the stage at Farrant's playhouse (cf. Collier's *Rarest Books in the English Language*, iv, 9).

(b) The following words of the late F. G. Fleay, written in 1882, are interesting in view of the recent discovery of the existence of a Blackfriars Theater as early as 1577: "The Paul's boys, for instance, acted in a singing room of their own till they were inhibited in 1589, and again from 1599 to 1606; the children of the Chapel also, in my opinion, acted in the Blackfriars building many years before it was rebuilt as a private theatre in 1596" (*Transactions Royal Historical Society, Old Series*, x, 114).

(c) *The Run-awaies Answere to the Rod for Run-awaies* (1625) has an interesting comment on the behavior of certain actors during the plague:

You yourselfe (could you haue gotte a Horse) would haue bin one of the Tribe of *Gad*, with one of your Comerades; for ther's no Dancing now to your *Theatrian* Poeticall Piping: Neither your *Frierians*, nor *Cock pitterians*, can for loue or money helpe you to a Plaudity, we wish for their owne sakes (and yours) they could; But many of them (that could get Winges) have kept company with vs in our flight.

² Allusions to the foul odor of the Bear-garden are legion. Cf., for example, Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, Induction; Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Scornful Lady*, iv, i; Florio's *Second Fruites* (1592), p. 155; Stubbes' *Anatomy of Abuses*, Ed. Furnivall, p. 177; *The Humourous Lieutenant*, iv, 4; Cowley's *Loves Riddle*, I, i; *Anglia*, xxii, p. 461.

(d) S. Hall's complimentary verses prefixed to Samuel Harding's unacted tragedy *Sicily and Naples*, published at Oxford in 1640, contain the lines:

No claps, or loud applause, (like Swans which breed
Onely in noyse) to give her issues birth,
No *Hums*, not *Dam-me-boyes* to set her forth:
Scorning all glory that is not her owne,
Nor needing a *Blacke-Fryers* shaven crowne,
(As some,) to wispe her temples, though put forth
So poore, that *six-pence* charge buyes all she's worth;
She'le out-blaze bright *Aglaura's* shining robe:
Her scene shall never change, the world's her *Globe*.

Can "a *Blacke-Fryers* shaven crowne" possibly be a reference to the sign of the famous theater?

(e) Speaking of English dances, John Evelyn in his *A Character of England* (1659) says that they "appear more like the *Farce* of a *Comedy* at the *Hotel de Bourgogne*, than a *Ball of the Noblesse*"; and a marginal note explains *Hotel de Bourgogne* as "The playhouse at Paris, as once ours at Blackfryers" (p. 51).

(f) In Henry Farley's *The Complaint of Paulus* (1616) St. Paul's is made to say that within the past few years she has seen many new buildings, "some for pleasure, some for health and recreation, some for Royall entertainments and sports, and many for charitable vses:

And I have seene the Globe burnt, and quickly made a Phoenix.

Q. But who sees me?

(g) Two possible compliments to Shakspeare's playhouse may underlie the reference to the "World" in the following passages, the first from Richard Woodfall's verses prefixed to Lewis Sharpe's *The Noble Stranger* (1640), the second from the anonymous *The Incomparable Poem Gondibert Vindicated From the Wit-Combats of Four Esquires* (1653):

(i). Nor can she [Sharpe's Muse], had she rob'd the fluent store
Of Donns wise Genius, make thy merits more:
No, 'tis thy owne smooth numbers must preferre
Thy Stranger to the Globe-like Theatre.

(i). O hopefull *Inigo*, towardly old man,
That know'st so much, that *Daphne* [D'Avenant] nere knew letter,
Oxford him bred, *Paris* brought up. Who can
(And the Globe clapt his Playes) who can do better? (p. 29).

4. The Fortune and the Red Bull

(a) In *Pimlyco, or Runne Red-Cap* (1609) the poet advises the host in words which perhaps throws some light on the quality of ale sold in the public theaters:

Build thy House round with Galleries,
Like to a Play-House; for thy Ale
(Bee't bad, bee't good, bee't new, bee't Stale)
Brings thee good Audience: from each shore,
Ships of Fooles lanch, to seeke thy Dore;
Ere prodigall Gulls saile backe agen,
Thei'le pay thee money to come in:
Keepe then, thy wife and thou, the dores
Let those within wipe out the Scores.
Yet (O vile counsell!) why do I labour
To have a Christian wrong his neighbour?
Each afternoone thy House being full,
Makes Fortune blind, or Gelds The Bull.

(b) *Crete Wonders foretold By Her crete Prophet of Wales*, a tract printed in 1647, echoes a well-known passage in John Melton's *Astrologaster* (1620):

There shall also crete inflammations of Lightning tis' happen year about the fortune in Colding-Lane, if the players can get leave to act the tragedies of Doctour *Faustus* in which Tempest shall be seen shag-haired Tivills, runne roaring with squibs in teir mouthes, while drummes make thunder in the tiring house, and the twelve pennie hireling make artificiall lights in her heavens.

(c) In Thomas Jordan's *Walks of Islington and Hogsdon* (1663) Pimpwell, on returning to Hogsdon from Redcross Street, remarks to Rivers (II, i): "Who should I meet withall coming from thence through the Fortune-Playhouse yard, but old Jones,"—which should be compared with the "Play-house yard" shown in Ogelby and Morgan's map of London (1677) printed by Adams to face page 270 of his *Shakespearean Playhouses*.

(d) R. Speed's *The Counter Rat* (1635)³ has an interesting explanation by a musician why he and his companions were arrested and placed in the Counter. A party of drunkards had insisted that they should go to

³ An earlier edition appeared in 1628.

the Blue Bore,
Kept by mad Ralph at Islington.

After arriving at Mad Ralph's the musicians and their patrons became drunk, but the former managed to make their escape:

The company then being fast asleepe,
And we paid soundly, out did creepe
Into the high-way—O sweet Moone!
We, but for thee, had beene undone.

.
Three in one ditch being almost drown'd
Yet out we scrambled, and a long
The Play house came,—where seeing no throng,
We surre 'twas sure some scurvie play,
That all the people so sneak'd away,
And so the Players descended were
To th' Starres, Nags-head, or *Christopher*.
To all those tavernes (we cry'd) Let' goe,
At which one fell, and then swore—No.

From the Red Bull they pass the "Bars at Smith-field," the stews near "Cow-Crosse," and

through the Horse-faire
Into the middle of Long-Lane.⁴

(e) No. 79 of the "hundred excellent conceits" added to the 1559-60 edition of Thomas Lupton's *A Thousand Notable Things* reads: "When Stage-plays were in use, there was in every place one that was called the Foole; as the Proverb saies, *like a Fool in a Play*; at the Red-Bull Play-house, it did chance that the Clown, or the Fool, being in the Attireing house, was suddenly called for upon the Stage, for it was empty, he suddenly going, forgot his Fooles-cap, one of the players bad his boy take it and put it on his head as he was speaking, no such matter (saies the Boy) there's no manners nor wit in that, nor wisdom neither, and my Master needs no Cap, for he is known to be a Fool without it, as well as with it" (pp. 357-58).

⁴With this interesting comment on the habits of the Red Bull players should be compared Prynne's statement in his *Histriomastix* that the players are panders, or at "leastwise neighbours to them": "witness the Cockpit and Drury Lane; Blackfriars playhouse and Duke Humphries; the Red Bull and Turnball-street; the Globe and Bankside brothel-houses, with others of this nature."

(f) No. 339 of *A Choice Banquet of Witty Jestes* (1660) is titled "On the Fool in the Play": "A Gentleman took his son along with him to the Red Bull Playhouse in St. John street to see a Comedy, which was very well acted by *Pimponio* in the *Opportunity*: upon their return his father askt him whom amongst all those brave Fellows he most affected? Truly, replied the Boy, I liked the Fool best, and could have wisht them all Fools for his sake, because he made the most mirth."

(g) Among the less familiar ⁵ references to the rant at the Red Bull should be included Flecknoe's words in his *Sixty-nine Enigmaticall Characters* (Ed. 1658, p. 121):

She looks high, and speaks in a majestick tone,
like one playing the Queens part at the Bull.

(h) In the address to the reader prefixed to *A New Book of Mistakes* (written ca. 1637) the author, after explaining the word *bull* in the sense of a blunder, remarks that the kinship of such "bulls" is not acknowledged by the Black Bull in Bishop-gate Street, the White Bull that tosses dogs at the Bear Garden, nor by "the Red Bull in Saint Johns Streete, who for the present (alack the while) is not suffred to carrie the Flagge in the main-top."⁶ May this not after all be a reference to the frequency of "bulls" or verbal oddities in Red Bull plays, in view of John Cleveland's remark in his character of *A Country Committeeman* (ca. 1645): "He is *persona in concreto* (to borrow the solecism of a modern statesman). You may translate it by the Red Bull phrase, and speak as properly, Enter seven devils *solus*" (Morley's *Seventeenth Century Characters*, p. 299). And in view of Cleveland's "Red Bull phrase" one may ask whether the following poem, which occurs in *Wit and Drollery* (Ed. 1656, pp. 155-56) under the title "A Red Bull Prologue," and in the third edition (1686)

⁵ Cf. the well-known references to crude performances at the Fortune and the Bull in the anonymous poem prefixed to Randolph's works (Ed. Hazlitt, II, 504), Thomas Carew's verses prefixed to Davenant's *Just Italian* (1630), Trincalo's words in *Albumazar* (1615), Wither's *Abuses Stript and Whipt* (1615), Cowley's *The Guardian*, II, vi and IV, 8 (cf. also his *Cutter of Colman-Street*, III, vii), *Wit at Several Weapons*, II, 2, Gayton's *Notes on Don Quixote* (Ed. 1654, p. 24), etc.

⁶ Apparently an allusion to the plague of 1636-37. Cf. W. C. Hazlitt's *Prefaces and Dedications*, p. 359.

of Richard Head's *Nugae Venales* (p. 184) as "A Bull Prologue, Supposedly write by Sr. W. D.," may not be another joke at the expense of Red Bull language:

You that do sitting stand to see our Play
Which must this night be acted, here today,
Be silent pray; though you aloud to talk
Stir not a foot, though up & down you walk;
For every silent noise the Players see
Will make them mute, & speak full angerly;
But go not yet, until you do depart
And unto as your smiling frownes impart;
As we most thanklesse thankful will appear
And waite upon you home; but yet stay here.

5. The Bear Garden and the Hope

(a) With John Taylor's words in his *Bull, Beare, and Horse* (1638),

And that we have obtained againe the game
Our Paris Garden Flag proclaimes the same,

should be compared the lines in Richard Turner's *Nosce Te (Humours)*, published in 1607:

Shine hollow Caues, and thou celestiall round,
Droppe downe harmonious accents from thy spheares,
Let heaven and earth with merry noise resound,
The Flagge hangs out to day thei'l bait the beares

(Sig. Bi.)

(b) Thomas Powell's *Tom of All Trades* (1639) contains the words: "I now espy mine Host of the Bull here in *Saint Albans* standing at his doore upon his left leg like to the old Drummer of Parish-Garden, ready to entertain us" (p. 49),—which may refer to one of the "entertainers" at the Bear Garden, though it may be an allusion to the use of Paris Garden as a drilling-ground for soldiers. *Hudibras*, it will be remembered, was

Bred up where discipline most rare is,
In military garden Paris.

(c) An interesting document not referred to in the various discussions of bear-baiting is Henry Peacham's *Merry Discourse of Meum and Tuum* (1639), which handles very amusingly the

bear-garden squabbles, "the manifold contention and quarrels betweene the Bear Wards and the City Butchers, for the first turnes, or courses with the Dogges," etc.

(d) Much discussion has grown up around a passage in iv, i of Dekker's *Satiromastix* (1602). Tucca on entering greets Horace (Jonson) and then inquires of Asinius, "What's my name, Bubo?"

Asinius. Wod I were hang'd if I can call you any names but Captaine and Tucca.

Tucca. No, Fye'st, my name's Hamlet reuenge: thou hast been at Parris garden hast not?

Horace. Yes, Captaine, I ha plaide Zulziman there.

The clear reference to plays at Paris Garden has caused trouble. Ordish (*Early London Theatres*, p. 272), following Rendle, thought that the passage refers to Jonson's having acted at the Swan, located in the Paris Garden district; while C. W. Wallace (*Eng. Studien*, 43, pp. 370-71) thinks the passage refers to Jonson's acting a rôle in the *Isle of Dogs* presented at the Swan. But a more generally accepted view is that of Boas and others (*Works of Kyd*, liii and xci), the view that the first part of Kyd's speech refers to the acting of Kyd's old play of *Hamlet* at Paris Garden and the latter part to Jonson's performing in *Soliman and Perseda* at the same place. Very recently Østerberg in his *Studier over Hamlet-Teksterne*, Part I (1920), has opposed the theory that the passage refers to a performance of a *Hamlet* at Paris Garden, a position which Mr. J. Dover Wilson accepts most enthusiastically, writing thus (*Mod. Language Review*, xv, 439): "Mr. Østerberg shows conclusively that the oft-quoted sentence from Dekker's *Satiromastix* (1602)—'my name's Hamlet reuenge: thou hast been at Parris garden hast not?'—has been misunderstood through being taken out of its context. Tucca addresses the first half of his speech to Asinius and the second to Horace, so that there is no connection between the two remarks. It appears, moreover, from what follows that Paris Garden is referred to as a bear-garden and not as a playhouse. There was therefore no intention whatever of linking *Hamlet* with a performance at Paris Garden, as all previous critics have supposed. The point is one of considerable importance, since it renders the history of the *Hamlet* text a straightforward one from 1594 onwards."

It is hardly fair or safe to oppose the view of Mr. Østerberg, since I have been unable to consult a copy of his work, but if the words of Mr. Wilson are an adequate and trustworthy presentation of the new theory, then there seems to be no reason to give up the generally accepted view, since it does not seem to have been "placed out of court." Unquestionably the first part of Tucça's speech is addressed to Asinius and the latter part to Horace, but that is no reason for not believing that the mention of "Hamlet revenge" naturally suggests to the mind of Tucça the place where the piece was acted and the somewhat pointed question which he addresses to Horace. Unless we assume some such association of ideas, we shall have to explain a remarkable hop in the thinking of Captain Tucça. Mr. Østerberg is also quite right in saying that Tucça in his subsequent remark refers to Paris Garden as a bear-garden. That is the point of the whole passage, for Dekker wishes to bring out the uncomplimentary fact that Jonson had associated with the very worst troupes of players. We may question whether Jonson ever ambled by "a play-wagon in the highway" or took "mad Jeronomoes part" or acted Zulziman at the Bear-garden, but there can be no doubt that Dekker wished to give the impression that he had done all of these things.

That plays as well as puppet-shows⁷ and the performances of trained animals⁸ were sometimes given at the earlier Bear-garden is certainly implied by Horace's words above. Prynne, too, in his *Histrionomastix* (folio 556), speaking of the Paris Garden disaster of 1583, seems to say that people sometimes resorted to the unfortunate structure "to see Beare-bayting, Playes, and other pastimes"⁹. Of considerable interest in this connection are stanzas

⁷Cf. Ordish's *Early London Theatres*, p. 139 and McKerrow's Ed. of works of Nash, I, 83.

⁸Nash in *The Returne of the renowned Cavaliero Pasquill of England* (1589) speaks of "strange trickes and deuices between the Ape and the Owle" at Paris Garden (McKerrow, I, 83). Can the word *owle*, Elizabethan cant for a fool, refer to some clown trick at Paris Garden? On the ape at Paris Garden see also McKerrow's *Nash*, III, 104 and IV, 352; Collier's *Hist. Eng. Dram. Lit.* (1831), III, 279; Bond's Ed. of Lyly, III, 406. On the trained ape in general see *Modern Lang. Notes*, XXXII, 215-221 and XXXV, 248-49.

⁹Lambard's frequently quoted passage in his *Perambulation of Kent* (Ed. 1596) referring to those who go "To Paris Garden, the Bell Savage or Theatre, to beholde beare baiting, enterludes or fence play" is even

13 and 14 in "A North Country Song" printed in *Wit and Drollery* (1656):

I staid not there, but down with the Tide,
I made great hast, and I went my way;
For I was to see the Lions beside,
And the Paris-garden all in a day.

When Ise come there, I was in a rage,
I rayl'd on him that kept the Beares,
Instead of a Stake was suffered a Stage,
And in Hunkes his house a crue of Players (p. 78.)

I do not know the date of this song. The words "Hunkes his house" would seem to indicate that the author is speaking of conditions before the building of the Hope in 1613—the period when the famous Harry Hunks was alive¹⁰—but this is by no means certain in view of the fact that early in the seventeenth century the word *hunks* became a general term for a bear or a surly elderly person.¹¹ If the author of the song is referring to late conditions, then the passage above invalidates the statement of Adams¹² and Greg¹³ that there is no evidence to show that the Hope was ever used for plays after 1616.¹⁴

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vaguer than Prynne's remark and consequently of little value as evidence. The same is true of Rye's condensation of Zinzerling's words (ca. 1610) regarding the London playhouses: "The theatres (*Theatra Comoedorum*) in which bear and bulls fight with dogs; also cock-fighting" (*England as Seen by Foreigners*, p. 133).

¹⁰George Stone, a contemporary of Hunks died ca. 1610 (cf. Greg's *Henslowe Papers*, p. 105, note). Hunks is referred to in No. 43 of Sir John Davies' *Epigrams*, which were surely written by 1596; he is specifically referred to as if he were still living in Dekker's *Work for Armourers* (1609) and Peacham's lines prefixed to Coryat's *Crudeties* (1611).

¹¹Cf. *New English Dictionary* under "hunks."

¹²*Shakespearean Playhouses*, p. 336.

¹³*Henslowe's Diary*, I, 68.

¹⁴Of course Freshwater's nonsense in v, i of Shirley's *The Ball* (1639) can hardly be twisted into evidence that plays were or were not given at the Hope. Speaking of Paris—which he derives from the name of Priam's son, as Paris Garden is similarly derived by John Taylor—he remarks: "Here I observ'd many remarkable buildings, as the university, which some call the Louvre; where the students made very much of me, and carried me to the Bear-garden, where I saw a play on the Bank-side, a very pretty comedy call'd *Marthame*, in London."